

Groups of the European Parliament

Most Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) belong to political parties in their respective countries, but these members then form groups in the EU parliament, typically along party lines. Other than the various Non-Inscrits (NI), who wish to remain unaligned, here are all of the current groups roughly in order of political leaning:

European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL)

Left to far-left

GUE/NGL is composed of non-revolutionary anti-capitalists such as democratic socialists and some communists. They believe in major economic restructuring and socialization, civil rights, and environmental activism. GUE/NGL parties are often populist, and are skeptical of the EU and other international agreements on trade and immigration, viewing them as roadblocks to the establishment of socialism or general social programs.

Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D)

Center-left

The group for traditional social democrats, creators of the European-style welfare state. Though mostly socially liberal and environmental, S&D parties are defined by their economic progressivism and deep support for European healthcare and social welfare programs. They are generally pro-EU, and advocate for increased spending by the EU as a whole. In other areas, such as drug issues and immigration, the stances of member parties vary. S&D and the center-right EPP are and have always been the two largest groups in Parliament, but have recently lost ground to the other groups.

The Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)

Center to left

The Greens/EFA group comprises a unique mix of political parties. The majority of them are center-left, environmentally-focused green parties, but they also include parties for regional issues, democracy-focused pirate parties, and a few others. Parties in this group tend to be the most environmental and socially liberal, promoting cultural diversity, civil rights, youth issues, and drug legalization more on average than any other group. Though they are generally pro-EU, some parties in Greens/EFA promote devolution of power to local governments.

Renew Europe (RE)

Center

Renew Europe was, until recently, known as the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE). This name change is unsurprising, as RE is the most pro-EU group, advocating for vastly increasing the scope and powers of the EU. They are also the most

internationally-focused group, promoting freedom of movement, free trade, and political accords. They mostly promote aiding the environment, are typically very socially liberal, and tend to focus on increasing the efficiency of existing social programs, as opposed to creating new ones. RE parties also appeal to businesses through certain free market economic policies, though individual parties may lean slightly more to the left or right.

European People's Party (EPP)

Center-right

Longtime rival of S&D, EPP is currently the largest group in parliament. They are politically and economically cautiously conservative, favoring a slow, careful restriction of the size of government, and the promotion of responsible business interests. Much like S&D, EPP parties are bound primarily through economic positions, and their other individual positions can vary, including on social issues, immigration, and environmental policy, but they are usually moderate stances. They are pro-EU, but view it more sternly, as a vehicle to ensure peace and cooperation, rather than as a way of solving countries' ills.

European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)

Center-right to right

ECR is more solidly conservative than EPP in most every regard. They sometimes advocate cuts to government spending and relaxing economic regulations, but are primarily bound by their social conservatism. They generally acknowledge climate change, but do less to combat it, and are often opposed to immigration, wanting those that do come through to be fully integrated in their cultures. They are also highly skeptical of the EU, and, though they do not wish to be rid of it entirely, they tend to advocate for reforms and reduction of its powers.

Identity and Democracy (ID)

Right to far-right

The European far-right, growing surprisingly in stability and status, is represented primarily by ID. Its parties are populist, care little about climate change, are highly socially conservative, and anti-immigration sometimes to the point of xenophobia. They tend to be very nationalistic and dogmatically promote their claimed national cultures. All ID parties are extremely skeptical of the EU, with some wanting to drastically slash its power, while others want to leave it or abolish it entirely.

**In the interest of transparency, I should state that, as a French citizen, I support a member party of the S&D group. I do, however, view parties in different countries and several political groups favorably, depending on their particular stances.*